



PAPAIOEA
PALMERSTON
NORTH
CITY

PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

MINUTES ATTACHMENTS STRATEGY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

9:00 AM, WEDNESDAY 28 MAY 2025

COUNCIL CHAMBER, FIRST FLOOR
CIVIC ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
32 THE SQUARE, PALMERSTON NORTH

STRATEGY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

28 May 2025

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| 9 | Petition: Designation of an on-leash dog area at Linklater Reserve | |
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24 May 2025

Submission: Palmerston North City Council Dog Control Policy Amendment 28 May 2025

Further to our 2024 Dog Control Policy submission included on page 2, the Kelvin Grove Community Association wishes to submit the following in support of Option 5:

1. Two of our members, Val Burr and Ross Linklater, were involved in the initial establishment of Linklater Reserve; they can assure councillors that the park was always intended to be for the enjoyment of all, as stated in the agreement the PNCC made with Ross Linklater when he sold them the land. This is reflected in paragraph 4.29 of the council report which makes it clear that Linklater Reserve is not a 'dog park'.
2. There are currently 18 dog exercise areas on the Council website, including two others in Kelvin Grove. Linklater Reserve would still be one of the largest under Option 5.
3. Currently, some of the southern section of the park is designated a **no-dog area** due to the presence of the children's play equipment, but it is not fenced and many dog owners ignore this. There is also a barbecue nearby, but would you use one in an off-leash area?
4. In the 2023–2024 period, PNCC received 23 complaints about dogs at Linklater Reserve, including three for dog attacks causing injury. That is three too many.
5. In the same period, they received 103 complaints about uncontrolled dogs in all PN parks, 18 of which resulted in injury, including 12 dogs, 2 cats and 6 people.
6. These figures are the tip of the iceberg, as we know from our community Facebook page that many people do not report incidents such as the one earlier this month which landed the owner with a \$1,000 vet bill when her dog was attacked by another dog.
7. There was only one prosecution filed as a result of a dog attack in the 2023–2024 period. Clearly, the existing Council policy of educating dog owners rather than enforcing the law is not working, which is hardly surprising as there is no budget for such education.
8. The Council report wisely advocates a fence between off-leash and on-leash areas with spring-loaded gates. The reason this is necessary is because there are too many poorly controlled dogs that don't come when they are called, posing a risk to the public. This is an admission that the current unbudgeted owner-education policy does not work.
9. The consultation was not representative. The majority (83%) of the responses were from dog owners. One reason for this is there were many signs at the park inviting responses that would not have been seen by people too scared to go there. As there are less than 10,000 registered dogs in the city and over 30,000 houses, therefore in a representative survey only a third of the responses would have been from dog owners.
10. While KGCA did propose Option 6 in our original presentation, we now support Option 5 as the fairest compromise for all concerned. This area stretches 600 m from the Roberts Line car park to the far boundary, and 200 m to 300 m in the other direction, equivalent to around 15 rugby pitches, and ensures good separation between dogs and children.

Option 5 splits the park ~50/50. This is more than fair to the 33% dog owners. We urge Councillors to adopt this option and restore safe use of the park to all the citizens of Palmerston North as per the original Linklater agreement.

Our original submission on 8 Feb 2024 said:

Due to frequent attacks by off-leash dogs at Linklater Reserve, Kelvin Grove Community Association, request that Clause 20(l) of the Dog Control Policy is amended so that the dog exercise area at Linklater Reserve be restricted to a limited area of the park rather than the whole park. We request that the wording of 20(l) is amended from "(only the part open to the public)" to "(only the part both open to the public and designated by Council resolution)". Further, we request that the area is clearly signposted and fenced, with spring-loaded gates, to prevent off-leash dogs roaming outside the permitted area.

Through our community Facebook page and anecdotal evidence, we are aware of numerous incidents where people, or their young children or small dogs, have been attacked or threatened by dogs not under the control of their owners. These incidents are most frequent early in the morning, late in the evening, or at weekends when dog control officers are not normally working. Several posts have been from people who no longer feel able to use the park due to either witnessing or experiencing attacks.

Due to the size and intimidating behaviour of the dogs involved, and frequent aggressive attitudes of the dog owners, most people are reluctant to report an incident. Many are too concerned with their own welfare, or that of their children or pet, to gather sufficient evidence to make a complaint, even if they felt safe doing so.

As a community association, we submit that it is totally unacceptable that many Kelvin Grove residents, especially the elderly and those with small children, feel unsafe in this community facility. We believe the behaviour of a minority should not be allowed to restrict the safety and quiet enjoyment of the majority when the Council can provide ample space for off-leash dog exercise by setting aside a portion of the 25.5 ha park.

One of our members, ex-councillor Ross Linklater, has suggested that the exercise area is restricted to the section of the park furthest from Kelvin Grove Rd, and that this area is fenced and spring-loaded gates are installed to prevent dogs escaping into the central and southern areas closer to Kelvin Grove Rd. Further, that the area is large enough to possibly be divided into two or more separate areas to limit interactions between dogs. The committee unanimously agrees.

Rather than define the precise dog exercise area in the regulation, we suggest that the amendment empowers the Council to define the area by resolution, thereby providing flexibility for it to redefine the area from time to time as circumstances require.

On behalf of Kelvin Grove Community Association



Chair.

Dog Control Policy

28 May 2025

Kelvin Grove Community
Association

Kelvin Grove Community Association
Submission – Dog Control at
Linklater Reserve

That Palmerston North City Council adopt
Option 5 from the recommendations by
Council officers to amend off-leash dog
controls at Linklater Reserve thereby again
making it a facility for the enjoyment of all
rather than a 'dog park' for the use of a
minority.

Kelvin Grove Community Association Submission – Dog Control Policy

- Why change current rules?
- Some dogs are poorly controlled - spoiling it for all
- Numerous incidents of dogs out of control inhibiting residents' enjoyment of the Reserve
- Current restrictions unclear and not observed
- Option 5 keeps off-leash dogs away from children's play equipment and barbeque area.
- Education policy doesn't work – needs \$\$\$\$

Kelvin Grove Community Association Submission – Dog Control Policy



Kelvin Grove Community Association Submission – Dog Control Policy

- Advantages of Option 5:
- Fairest - 50/50 split is fairest option for all
- Clearest – off-leash and on-leash areas are clearly defined, unlike present situation
- Safest - Keeps off-leash dogs away from children's play equipment and barbeque area.
- Practical - Good access to off-leash area from enlarged Roberts Line carpark

Kelvin Grove Community Association Submission – Dog Control Policy

- Advantages of Option 5:
- Minimises danger to vulnerable park users such as children and the elderly.
- Improves utilization of the Reserve and reduces travel to other suburbs
- Provides a safe area for people and for small dogs on-leash.
- Over 13 Hectares still off-leash – still fourth largest of 26 dog exercise area in Palmy.

Kelvin Grove Community Association Submission – Dog Control Policy

- Option 5: 600m x ~180/m270m so about 15 rugby fields
- Total circuit is further than here to Cook St and back!



Kelvin Grove Community Association Submission – Dog Control Policy

- Give park back to all residents
- Keep park users safe
- Adopt Option 5.
- Thank you.